



National Intrepid  
Center of Excellence

8901 WISCONSIN AVENUE, BLDG 51, BETHESDA, MD 20889

NICOE@MED.NAVY.MIL

www.nicoe.capmed.mil

## The NICoE Physical Therapy Program

Although the NICoE's patient population is comprised of service members suffering from comorbid mild traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions, many service members also present with physical injuries that impact their daily lives. The NICoE's physical therapy program evaluates and addresses these issues in collaboration with the rest of the clinical care team. By working together, the NICoE's physical therapists provide the service members with comprehensive evaluations and treatment initiations that allow for improvement of their vestibular, orthopedic, neurological and overall physical condition.

### Common Symptoms Requiring Physical Therapy

- Orthopedic issues, including pain and movement dysfunction
- Vestibular issues, including peripheral and central dysfunction
- Neurological issues, including changes in tone, gait and balance after a brain injury

### Physical Therapy Program Benefits

- Improved balance
- Reduced dizziness
- Modified or reduced pain
- Strengthened muscular system
- Increased muscular flexibility

### Program Description

Because of the unique opportunity to work with providers across multiple disciplines, the NICoE's physical therapy program is able to build and implement individualized treatment plans in an interdisciplinary care model. Each service member goes through neurological, vestibular and orthopedic one-on-one evaluation sessions within the first week at the NICoE. From these evaluations, the physical therapy team works to build a treatment plan that is tailored to the patient's specific needs and allows for comprehensive interaction with occupational therapists, audiologists and other disciplines as needed. As each plan is customized, the physical therapists determine how frequently each patient meets with them during their stay.

### Neurological Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is not typically associated with neurology; many physical issues can be rooted in neurological conditions. At the NICoE, service members who are exhibiting common physical deficits related to mild traumatic brain injury may present with difficulty dual tasking, dizziness and higher-level balance difficulties. The NICoE's physical therapists specialize in treating patients with mTBI and other psychological health disorders, ensuring that the needs of our specific patient population are met.